

# STROLABELLA

A Comical

# ROMANCE.

Containing an humourous and diverting History of a Company of *Strolling Players*, with an Account of the Origin, Progress, and Declension of the *Vagrantes*, or *Itinerant Actors*; together with their Religion, Laws, Customs, Morality, Amours and Peregrinations.

Compiled by a celebrated *Hottentot Philosopher*, for the Entertainment of that Polite People, and written with all the Purity and Elegance of the Language of his Country. Brought from the Cape of Good Hope by a Dutch Poet, and found in the *Library* of *Alexander the Copper Smith*, now faithfully Translated by his *Pupil* and Successor

---

RICHARD the Black-Smith.

---

Sweet as the Rose, and as the Morning Fair  
Such *Bella* is. ---

In the *Hottentot* thus,

Hot a tot, pot a tot, rotten wotten, Pot Hotten  
*Balla* bow wow.

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C O R K :

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*Matthew Deane Esq;*

*S I R,*

**T**H E following Sheets  
being manufactur'd  
in *Cork*, have a just Title  
to your Favour and Pro-  
tection. I know Sir, you  
will always encourage  
the Product of that City  
which you so worthily re-  
present; for this very Rea-  
son I have chosen you  
for my Patron.

I

## DEDICATION.

I shall not pursue the beaten Tract of Dedications, and force a Blush from you with extravagant Praises, and fullsome Adulation; And though my Book bears the Title of a Romance, I shall in my Epistle dedicatory observe the strictest Sincerity.

I must own Sir I have a view of Interest in prefixing your Name to this Performance, That alone will enhance it's Value, and the Citizens of *Cork*,  
will

## DEDICATION.

will be desirous to purchase it for the sake of the Dedication.

Your Name & Family Sir will be always dear to a City which hath experienced their Generosity and Honour; The Poor supported by their Charities, those living Monuments of their Bounty, are Testimonies of their tender Compassion, and extensive Liberality.

Your Family Sir is distinguished for a Hearty Zeal in promoting the true

## DEDICATION.

true Interest of *Ireland*,  
for diffusive Benevolence,  
engaging Affability, and  
a sweet Complacence of  
Temper, joined to an un-  
biass'd Integrity ; what I  
have hitherto said can  
need no Apology, I have  
only declar'd the Senti-  
ments of all who are ac-  
quainted with the virtues  
of you & your Ancestors.

But what shall I say for  
dedicating so trifling a  
Work to so worthy a Gen-  
tleman? I hope Sir, as  
the Piece is humourous,  
the

## DEDICATION.

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ad whole inoffensive & cal-  
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Sir

Your most Obedient

Humble Servant,

*Richard Bulkeley:*

Original in the

B

Bath



DEDICATION

the Characters in the  
in Low Life, and the  
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culated for Amusement  
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Your most Obedient

Humble Servant,

Richard Baskin

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# STROLABELLA

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## ROMANCE.

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### CHAP. I.

*Strolabella's Birth and Education, an Account of the Vagrantes, and their Transportation hither.*

**I**N a certain \* City famed for Luxury and Extravagance, where the Chance of the Dice, have reduced many Wealthy Men to Poverty and Pimping, and railed as many *Sharppers* to Reputation & Equipage; Where *Diseases* procured by Wine, are removed by Water, or infallibly cured by *Death* and the *Doctors*; In this Emporium of Pleasure was the lovely *Strolabella* born; on the very Instant the charming Sprawler was disclosed to Light, she discovered Hereditary Beauties; The little Lump of Original Sin then no bigger than

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an

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\* *The Bath*

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an Apple, bore a vast Resemblance to her Parents, the Mouth declared the Mother, and the Nose confessed the Father.

*Strolabella* sprung from the ancient Race of the <sup>1</sup> *Vagrantes*, lately a numerous Tribe in a neighbouring Kingdom, tho' at present all but <sup>2</sup> two Families are Proscribed; They are Descendants from one *Thespis* a *Ballad-singer*, who was not only the first Father of the Stage, but was likewise with all probability the first Inventor of a Cart; That useful Vehicle being to this Day, in great Reputation among the *Vagrantes*, not only as a necessary Conveyance for their Goods and Chattles, but also for their Illustrious Personages.

As the Charming *Strolabella* grew in years, she improved also in the Customs & Manners of the *Vagrantes*; she was early instructed how to speak *Epilogues*, play little Parts, and to ask for every thing she lik'd; such extraordinary Care was taken in cultivating the Infant, that before she had compleated her seventh year, little *Mills* had attained to an admirable assurance, and

<sup>1</sup> *Stroling Playes*, <sup>2</sup> *the two Theatres Royal.*

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and acquired a perfect Knowledge in the whole Mystery of Begging.

The *Vagrantes* are a Religious Sect of Itinerants, in the Cities and Villages where they made any stay, they erected Temples exceedingly magnificent, which during the Time of exhibiting their Religious Mysteries were illuminated in a beautiful manner; Here they represented the Wars of the Ancient Heroes, and the Loves of the Gods; They sung the Destruction of *Troy* and the Intrigues of *Jove*; Nay they were Teachers of Oratory and Preachers of Morality, their Instructions were not only pleasing but profitable. Their Temples were frequented by Persons of the highest Rank, who liberally contributed to the support of their *Priests* and *Priestesses*, and had the *Vagrantes* the art of saving money as well as their Kindred Strolers the *Jews*, some of them might have been very Opulent: But to do them Justice, they had nobler Sentiments, their Cares seldom extended beyond the present Moment, and to lay up any Provision for to morrow, was in their Opinion an Affront to the Deity, and the highest Distrust of Providence.

## STROLABELLA,

They took Pleasure in Eating & Drinking, yet the *Vagrantes* had their Days of Abstinence, but then this Abstinence was involuntary, and by no means an Act of Religion, for they held Fasting in Abomination: but if through the Iniquity of the Times their Temples were neglected, and compulsive Necessity rendered this rigid Discipline unavoidable, as soon as the Scene was changed, they shew'd their Abhorrence by revelling in Plenty and Abundance.

The *Vagrantes* are generally *Free-Thinkers*, or rather People of no thought at all; They look upon Thought, as a troublesome uneasy Companion, a disturber of Indolence, and an Invader of Tranquility: that Calamity is often anticipated by Forecast, and not avoided by Reflection; they are entirely careless about the Event of Things, pursuant to the words of the Dramatic Poet, viz:

*If Fate be not, how can we then foresee?  
Or how can we avoid it, if it be?*

In short they seem to be the most merry and inconsiderate mortals in the Universe.

For several Ages the *Vagrantes* were held in some Estimation, till about two  
years



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years since, they received a terrible overthrow, as I hinted before; The Occasion was this, they had deviated widely from their first Institution, which was to represent Human Nature in a proper Light, to punish Vice, and to reward Virtue, Instead of solid Sense and Morality, they introduced abundance of ridiculous and dangerous Innovations, they pretended to divert their Audience with Squibs and Crackers, nay often with Stink-Pots, and those levelled at Persons in Authority, and eminent in their Stations. Repeated Indecencies of this Kind, procured an Edict of State against their Profession, which terminated in the Subversion of the whole Tribe, except two Families, who reside in the *Metropolis*, and are honoured with a Royal Protection; But they disown the Name of *Vagrantes*, and though they actually sprung from 'em, they pretend to have no Knowledge of 'em, or alliance with 'em: I am informed some of them ride in their Coaches, which surely is not consistent with the Plainness and Humility of their first Founder, who chose to show himself in a Cart; But such is the Pride

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Pride and Intolence of Human Nature, that Men forget the Simplicity of their Forefathers, and run mad after strange Inventions.

The *Vagrantes* thus brought to Ruin by their own Misconduct, & subjected to heavy Penalties, if they followed their Profession in their own Country, prudently looked out for a safer Shoar; Several of them landed in this Kingdom, and with the first; *Strolero*, *Strolerina*, *Strolabella*, the aged *Strolabunda*, with a numerous Train of Dependants, with some Cloaths, Scenes, Machines, Wallets, Band-boxes, and other Decorations suitable to the Occasion.

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### CHAP. II.

*Strolero* and *Strolerina* described.

AT the Time of the Arrival of the *Vagrantes*, *Strolero* was about fifty years of Age, without any deformity in his Person, a tall straight man, of a proper size to carry a Musket; He had indeed very little of the Gentleman in his Countenance, his Aspect betrayed a Boorish Rusticity, and

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& his Features were very strong of the *Engish Waggoner*: His Clownish Deportment would admit of no disguise, and *Strolero* in the Robes of Majesty, resembled an *Als* in a *Lyon's Skin*; His Voice was loud and impetuous, which in any unbyass'd Corporation might procure him the Office of Town Cryer. He possessed one Quality rarely to be met with among the *Vagrantes*, viz. the Art of saving Money; He knew how to lay up for a Rainy Day, and when there has not been a Denier in his whole Company, which was often the Case, then would *Strolero* shew his green Purse, expose the sum total of his Happiness and give them a Sight of what they must never expect to touch. *Strolero* was certainly a Person of a very untoward Mind, had he been Master of any one good Qualification, as an honest Historian, I would faithfully record it to his Honour; To make the Picture agreeable, there ought to be a just Disposition of Light and Shade; but *Strolero* was a Complication of Evils without the least Virtue, He was more unpolished than an *American Savage*, intolerably Intolent, shockingly Impu-

## STROLABELLA.

Impudent, and surprizingly Ignorant: After all I have said, I am obliged to do him this Piece of Justice, to confess he was a Two-legged Animal, and only wanted common Humanity to be a sociable Creature.

Sure never were two Persons so unequally pair'd as *Strolero* and his Wife; *Strolero* was hardly a degree above a Brute, and *Strolerina* was an accomplished Fine Lady, charming in her Person, elegant in her Dress, and engaging in her Behaviour; she was very compassionate in her Nature, her Charity was not confin'd to her own Species, it extended even to the Brute Creation; she entertain'd in her Family a Monkey, a Squirrel, and a Lap-dog; The first seem'd to be a more polite Animal than *Strolero* himself, the Squirrel was a Companion to *Strolabella*, and the Lap-dog her own Favourite. By personating abundance of Characters in High Life, she had acquired all the Airs of a Lady of Quality: She did not espouse *Strolero* for Love, but for Convenience; The World is too apt to give into Censure, therefore she thought it necessary to take *Strolero* as the Guardian of her Ho-

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nour, she rarely admitted him to her Bed, nor was there ever any Pledge of their Conubial Loves (for *Strolabella* was her Daughter by the first *Venture*) whither she thought it an Indignity to human Nature, to propagate any thing like *Strolero*, or whither *Strolero* was not deficient in an essential Point of Manhood, is yet a Secret, if the first, it was an Argument of Prudence and self Denial, if the last it was a singular Instance of her Fidelity and Virtue. She had all the Disorders, and Remedies requisite for the finest Lady; Fits, Vapours, Hysterics, Sal volatile, Laudanum, and Gin. Few of the *Vagrantes* excelled her in her Profession; Her private Life was without Reproach, and (as I shall have occasion to mention hereafter) she made her *Exit* from this grand Theatre, the World, with Applause.

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### CHAP. III.

*Strolabella* and *Ragamuffina* described.

AT the Time of the Proscription of the *Vagrantes*, *Strolabella* was fifteen  
C years



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years old, of a middle Stature, and though she was very engaging, she could not be reckoned a Beauty; Her Face was as rugged as a Welsh Mountain, and her Complexion the Colour of an *Egyptian Fortune-teller*; But then she had a bewitching look, a Serpentine ogle with her Eyes dangerous to behold; Her Nose resembled the regular Gnomon of a Brazen Sundial; Velvet of a Crimson dye expresth her Lips; The interior Part of an Oyfter Shell show the whiteness of her Teeth; No Guard du Vin of a Lady of Quality, was pleasanter than her Breath; A delicious Dutch Cheese divided into two equal Parts represents her Breasts; Her Chest was prominent; Her Shape lessen'd beautifully by Degrees, like the Hopper of a Mill: Her Hands and Arms were nicely framed, the different Colours of the Skin and Veins, had some similitude to a fine Cake of Castile Soap; She had a Leg and Foot exquisite to behold, no Statuary in polished Ivory could form so compleat an one, to adorn the Shop of a Toyman, or to make an old Leacher's Tobacco-stopper.

The Endowments of her Mind, exceeded the Beauties of her Person; She had an

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acute penetrating Wit, a quick Apprehension, her Speech was voluble and her Voice harmonious. She improved herself vastly by Reading, not Books of Religion, for she probably conceived a distaste to that sort of Reading, by observing *Strolabunda* her Grandmother, continually poring, yet never the better; This hobling piece of Antiquity, had indeed a *Library* furnished with a number of sanctified *Authors*, Treasures full of Piety, though of an odd Appellation, viz. Spiritual Geneva, or a Cordial Dram for a fainthearted Sinner; a Pair of Stilts for a Dwarf in Religion; Crums and Sugar Plumbs for Babes and old Women, with many more of the like Style: *Strolabella's* Closet was adorn'd with Books of a different kind, viz. L: Apuleius's, Golden Ass, Letters between a Nobleman and his Sister; Callipædia, the Life of Sally Salsbury, A Canting Dictionary, Ovids Art of Love, and Ld. Rochester's Poems; all nicely bound, Gilded and Letter'd, fit for the Cabinet of a Vestal Virgin: But as this young Lady is the Heroine of my story I shall leave her at present and proceed

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to *Ragamuffina*, the next considerable Personage in *Strolero's* Drama.

*Ragamuffina* was very tall, had a fine Bachanalian Face, curiously adorn'd with Rubies and Saphires; there was a *Noli me tangere* conspicuous about her Mouth, Her Breath indeed was Salubrious & Medicinal, a Puff taken in a Morning was an effectual *Emetic*, and hath been prescribed that way with amazing Success; Her Neck and Breasts are difficult to describe, therefore it will be sufficient in this place to say they were the colour of *Oker*, and the last when she laugh'd, represented two *Hillocks* in a *Quagmire*: Her Arms and Hands, were proportioned to the height of her Body, & of a delicate Black and Blue; when she appeared in Breeches, she discovered an Handsome Leg and Foot; I have heard it indeed maliciously insinuated that from the last there proceeded some *Sudorific Effluvia*, which rendered her noxious and offensive: She was very careless in adorning her Person, for she drest in the ancient *Tatterdemalion Mode*; She was an Extraordinary Person in Conversation; had a pregnant Invention, and an admirable Talent at Detamation;

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mation; she very rarely made use of double Entenders, but exprest herself in that plain significant manner, which is taught in the Academy of *Billinggate*, and abounded in that sort of Wit, which has the Denomination of *Black-guard*. She was an Enemy to *Strolabella*, and in Love with *Truncheon*.

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### C H A P. IV.

*A Description of the Gentlemen belonging to Strolero's Company, viz: Truncheon & Buskin.*

**T** *Runcheon* was born and bred a Gentleman, he had a Gentleman's Fortune left him, & spent it like a Gentleman; the Gentleman was so strongly stamp'd upon him, that he could not be concealed in any Dress: He possessed a great many Genteel Accomplishments; he Danc'd with a fine Air, Sung pleasingly, and had a tolerable notion of Music, with a smattering of the French Tongue; But then he had no business to list with the *Vagrantes*, here he widely miss'd the Mark, for though his graceful Pretence captivated the Eyes of the Spectators, he could not please an Audience;



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dience; he delivered himself in a dull heavy, soporiferous manner, more becoming a *Non con Preacher*, than a *Dramatic Orator*: He lived very well, esteemed among the *Vagrantes*, respected by the Men, and admired by the Women; And so much regarded by *Strolerina* herself, that she designed to give him her Darling *Strolabella* in Marriage; but this Match was prevented by *Strolerina's* Death, and *Ragamuffina's* Artifices, as we shall find hereafter.

The next Figure, I present you with is *Buskin*; a Person of a very comely Vitage, a full Eye, and a well proportioned Note; One of his Checks appeared bigger than the other, being generally stuf with *Tobacco*: *Buskin* in his Theatrical Dreislooked very Grand; but in the Streets, you could not tell what to make of him; He wore an Hat, one Corner of which the Rats had cruelly devoured, nor were they less favourable to his Wig; a Piece of black Crape surrounded his Neck; that part of his Shirt which was visible, at a distance looked like Linnen, but on a nearer view, discovered itself to be Manufactured in a Paper Mill: His Coat was a Piece of Antiquity & Honour,

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nour, it was presented him by a Serjeant of *Grenadiers*, who wore it in the Day of Battle at *Blenheim*; The Buttons had slip'd away from it, for many a Day, but that defect was abundantly supplied with Skewers, Packthread, and Pins; it reached within a few Inches of his Ankle; His Hose were Scarlet, and because it is indecent for a Gentleman to appear with Holes in the Covering of his Legs, those were curiously darned with white Thread and black Silk; I shall say nothing of his Shoes, but that one had an Heel, and the other was buckled.

Thus wofully Eclipted, thus dismally obscured by Poverty, appeared the Heroic *Buskin*; who had still some Transparent Merit; He was good natur'd, affable and obliging; and withal so abstemious & Temperate, that he has subsisted for Twenty four Hours, upon no other provision, than a yard & half of Tobacco, an Onion & Salt a Bottle of Brandy, and an Eleemosinary Gallon of Ale. If you would see *Buskin* in the height of his Felicity; plac'd him in an Elbow chair by a Kitchen-fire, a Pipe in one Hand, & a Quart in the other; here would  
*Buskin*

## STROLABELLA.

*Buskin* entertain you with an hundred diverting Stories: This gaiety of Temper generally lasted, till the Reckoning was brought, and even then, *Buskin* was a Man who kept up to the standard of his Honour, for rather than be guilty of bilking an Houe, he once offered his Person as a pledge which was generously refused: I mention this as an extraordinary Instance of Mr. *Buskins* honesty & the Landlords Humanity. *Strolero's* brutish behaviour, had once provoked *Buskin* to Elope from the Company during his absence, his misfortunes obliged him to an office of Servility, this unhappy Gentleman was employed by a Gardiner as a Centinel to an Orchard, & notwithstanding he discharged his duty to the Satisfaction of his master; it was turned to his reproach, and procured him the Nick-name of *Scare crow*. I shall say but little of Mr. *Buskin's* Lady, but that she was the faithful Partner of his Bed, the Companion of his misfortunes, & the partaker of his Brandy. There were several others in *Strolero's* Company, viz. *Spout*, *Crack*, & *Harlequino*, the two first were Rivals, and immediately on *Strolerina's* death (which happened shortly

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ly after their arrival here) openly avowed their Love for *Strolabella*, but she was some days inconsolable for the loss of Her Mother, who had designed her for Mr. *Trunchion*, as will appear in the following Chapter.

### CHAP. V.

*Strolerina's wholesome advice to her Daughter, and the Death of that excellent Actress.*

**S**TROLERINA for want of breathing her native Air declined daily; finding herself near her Dissolution, she called for her Daughter *Strolabella*, to give her some necessary Instructions for the Regulation of her future conduct & behaviour; & began to exhort her in the following manner.

*My Child (says she) perhaps this is the last Time I may have power to call you by that tender & affectionate Name; be attentive to my Words & regard the advice of a dying Parent! You know (my Dear) I have no Estate, or Fortune to leave you, therefore your Happiness depends upon your own Discretion & Management: When you think proper to alter your present state, I would*  
D have



## STROLABELLA,

*have you take an Husband among the Vagrantes; I recommend Mr. Truncheon to you, as a Person of singular Merit, I am persuaded he will make you a kind & Indulgent Husband; I do not know any of our Tribe less tainted in his Morals; he is not addicted to Women, Drums nor Dice; A sober Husband (my Dear) is a Jewel of inestimable Value, if he offers his addresses to you, for my sake and your own, receive him kindly. His modesty cannot withstand the shock of a severe Repulse, besides I have reasons to believe Ragamuffina is laying snares to entrap him. The first Love makes a lasting Impression, if you find Admission to his Heart, I do not fear your securing him: I will moreover make it his Interest to marry you; I know Mr. Truncheon has ambition enough to appear drest like a Gentleman, therefore I will desire Strolero, to present him a Coat out of the Stock, I will order the Tinsel to be ripped off that it may appear plain and genteel. My Husband shall likewise bestow him one of his Tragedy Wigs: I will leave you all my Cloaths, Strolabunda your Grandmother cannot live long, so that you will shortly be Mistress of no contemptible Wardrobe. The Education of your*

*Children,*

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*Children will be of very little Expence, for if Mr. Truncheon hath not forgot his Learning, the Boys may be Instructed in Reading and Writing from the Father; And the Girls may be taught Plain-work and Stitching by the Mother. When you are a Wife, my Dear, there are two things I charge you to guard, against, viz. Jealousie and Geneva; Place an absolute Confidence in your Husband, and avoid drinking Drams; Honour him so much as to conceal his Imperfections, be faithful to his Bed, be seen sometimes at Places of Devotion, and shun Bawdy-Houses. Strolerina delivered this Charge in the most pathetic manner, and Strolabella vow'd obedience to her Instructions. In a few Days after, the incomparable Strolerina quitted the Stage of Life, and made her Exit with universal Applause. Her Death was generally bemoaned by the Vagrantes, Strolabunda and Strolabella were in extreme Grief, and even Strolero shed Tears. Crack the Poet to show his veneration for her memory, and at the same time to give an Hint of his Love for Strolabella, compos'd the following Lines.*

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## STROLABELLA,

*How can the charming Strolerina dye?  
Behold! she lives in Strolabella's Eye;  
The Mother's Beauties in the Daughter shine,  
And ev'ry Lover's Tongue must own with  
mine,*

*That Strolabella is a Nymph Divine.*

*For her the Mother's Obsequies I sing,  
For her my Fancy takes Poetic wing;  
Oh! dear delightful Object of Desire,  
For thee I fill the Glass, and string the Lyre,  
Thy name can make me sorrowful, or glad,  
Bellacan make me drunk, or make me mad.*

### CH A P. VI.

*Strolabella's Wealth, her Conduct towards  
her Lovers; Mr. Truncheon's Illness,  
and Ragamuffina's extraordinary care  
and Attendance.*

**A**T Strolerina's Death, Strolabella took Possession of her Parts and Cloaths, with a Casket full of such precious Stones, as are found in the Mines of *Cornwall*, the Quarries of *Bristol*, and the Rocks of *Kerry*, Her Person, her Merit, and her Riches brought her a Croud of Admirers: But like

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a dutiful Child she treasured up her Mother's Charge in her Memory; *Strolerina* had in the strongest terms recommended *Truncheon* to her for a Husband, *Truncheon* had never indeed declared himself on this Subject, he always treated her with Civility and Complaisance, but this was the Result of his good Breeding; she would willingly be obedient to her Mother, yet her Virgin Modesty would not permit her to confess a liking for a Man who had hitherto only treated her with bare Respect and good manners. *Crack* declared his Passion in such Terms as shock'd her Quiet; he made her the Constant Theme of his Verse, he exalted her above the Race of Mortals, and placed her among the Goddesses; His Flattery intoxicated her to that Degree, that if she did not believe herself deserving of such extravagant Praise, she imagined Mr. *Crack* thought her so; she grew fond of *Crack's* Conversation, she thought him a rare Schoolmaster to instruct her in the Art of Intriguing: But *Spout* was her darling Favourite; however she took care to conceal it; In short she managed her Lovers very well, considering she had three to deal with



## STROLABELLA.

with, viz: *Truncheon* the Gentleman, *Crack* the Poet, and *Sport* the Tragedian. But poor Mr. *Truncheon* met with a Misfortune which obliged him to take himself away from the Conversation of *Strolabella*, being in a very miserable Plight for a Lover; The Case was this, Mr. *Truncheon* by frequently changing his Lodging, and lying in Variety of Beds, some of them not over clean, he became infected with a malignant Dis-temper, which occasioned him to absent himself from the whole Company. *Ragamuffina* being very much enamoured with this Gentleman, followed him to his Place of Retreat; By the assistance of an Inch of Candle, stuck up in a Bottle on a joint-stool near the Bed, she discovered her beloved in a very unpleasant Scituation, rubbing his Back against the Bed Posts, and clawing his Flesh; The Virulence of his Malady, kept his Fingers in perpetual Agitation, so that in a few Days he had almost dead himself with his own Hands.

*Ragamuffina* condoled his wretched state, she offered him her Care and Attendance during his Illness, and that she might be more capable of serving him, she hired the

opposite

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opposite Garret for a Lodging Room; Here she thought on an effectual method to prevent *Truncheon's* visiting, or receiving Visits from any Person but herself; She took the Linnen Vestment from her Body, made one entire Plaister of it with Brimstone and Butter; then threw it over the naked shoulders of her Deplorable Lover; It stuck as close to his Flesh, as the Cearments about an Egyptian Mummy, and gave him such intollerable Pain, that he looked like *Hercules* in the envenomed Shirt: And indeed this was a fatal Present to *Truncheon*, it cemented a lasting Friendship between him and *Ragamuffina*, which lost him *Strolabella*; The Fumes exhaling from the Sulphurous Garment polluted the circumambient Air to such a degree, that his Appartment was rendered inaccessible to any but *Ragamuffina*; And here I must leave Mr. *Truncheon* like a Knight in an enchanted Castle, till an auspicious Seaton invites me to deliver him; and in the mean while proceed to *Crack* the next of *Strolabella's* Admirers.

C H A P.

# STROLABELLA.

## CHAP. VII.

### *The History of Crack the Poet.*

**C**RACK was a Poet, a Player and a Philosopher; either, neither and all of 'em; either in the opinion of People who knew no better, neither in the opinion of the Judicious, and all in his own Conceit. Some say Mr. Crack was Educated at a College, others at two Colleges, because to be sure there was not Learning enough in one to perfect so extraordinary a Genius and many say he had no Education at all. The Reader of this History, I hope will expect no more from me, than to shew Mr. Crack to him, in the same manner he has been pleased to represent himself to me. From his own Narrative, I find he was sent to College, when he was about fifteen years old; where he became so great a Proficient that he compleated in one year, what few can do in Seven; He finished his Studies, he finished indeed in a literal Sense, for he sold his Books and left the University. He became very early an Inamorato; within few Months after his Admission, he quit-

## A Comical ROMANCE.

ed the study of *Logic*, for that of *Love*: *Burgersdicius* was thrown a side, & the Letters of *Sylvia* & *Philander* were his pocket Companion. The object of his affection, was the lovely *Ragabella*, so called because her Parents sold second hand Cloaths; He admired her meerly for her Beauty, he indulged his Passion, and before he communicated the disorder of his Soul to *Ragabella*, he told it a thousand times to the Winds; the Woods and Dales, & Purling streams were Witnesses to his Love: At length putting Pen to Paper, he wrote the following elegant Epistle. viz.

### *Divine Ragabella,*

‘ My Seraphic charmer! There is not a  
 ‘ Simile in the Universe, which I find suita-  
 ‘ ble to your Person or my Passion, Words  
 ‘ cannot describe the One, nor exprets the  
 ‘ Other; I die when I see you not, and at  
 ‘ your sight I fall a Victim to the Goddess of  
 ‘ Beauty; As thou art to me a *Venus*, let me  
 ‘ be to thee an *Adonis*. I beg Pardon my Ce-  
 ‘ lestial Charmer, for making a College Shoe-  
 ‘ boy my Embassador on so important an Af-  
 ‘ fair as my Love, I dare answer for his Fi-  
 style="text-align: center;">E  
 style="text-align: right;">delity



## STROLABELLA,

‘delity and Secrecy. The Bell ringing for  
‘dinner obliges me in haste to subscribe  
‘myself your Eternal Admirer.

The Messenger delivered the Letter to *Ragabella*; This Lady wholly Intent on multiplying her Conquests, never refused Addresses of this Nature, where she had the least Reason to imagine the Person's Designs were honourable; Mr. *Crack* was too young to be tainted with Insincerity; a Youth of his Age, must be supposed to know very little of the Artifice of Women, or the Perfidy of Men; she dismissed the Bearer with a Smile, telling him to assure his Master he had no occasion to give himself the Trouble of Writing, when his Visits would be always acceptable. By the time this faithfull Emiffary had discharged his Commission, *Crack* had finished his Dinner; for being very little, he thought Fasting would be an impediment to his Growth, therefore he resolved to feed heartily, that he might improve in his Stature, and become more agreeable in the Eyes of the Enchanting *Ragabella*. As soon as he saw the Shoeboy, he ran to meet him, and when he heard in what manner his Adorable received the  
Letter,

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

Letter, his Eyes sparkled with unusual gladness; he blushed, he trembled, he was transported. After gratifying the Messenger, he retired to his Chamber, where he drest his Person out to the best Advantage, in order to visit the Delight of his Eyes, the object of his Wishes, and the Charmer of his Soul. He saw this transcendent Beauty behind a Counter; the Shop was adorned with Gowns of all Degrees, patch'd up with inimitable Skill; and abundance of China Ware, repaired by the Hands of *Ragabella* herself. She sat in a very pensive mood in Company with a Military Gentleman; *Crack* taking a View of the Dress and Accoutrements of the Soldier, retired without speaking a Word. He looked on the Gentleman in Armour, as his Rival, his Evil Genius, and the formidable Invader of his Love. He was not so ignorant, but he knew Women are captivated by outward appearance, a Pigmy and a Grenadier are unequal Competitors, and *Crack* was not so proper a Man as his Rival, by a foot and half; He then considered on the other Hand, that even in War itself Stratagem is prefer'd to Force, and Courage without Conduct terminates

## STROLABELLA,

minates in Temerity and Madneſs. But what provoked him to Rage, Phrenzy, and Deſperation, was *Ragabella's* Indiscretion in permitting the Addreſſes of a Red Coat; that now ſhe would not be worth his Conqueſt, ſince her Reputation muſt ſuffer by ſo dangerous an Amour; That Fame would ſoon blaſt her Virtue, and publiſh her Diſhonour. In this Perturbation of Mind did *Crack* remain till the Bell rung for Supper; the grateful Sound reſtored him to his former Tranquility; His Appetite was ſtronger than his Paſſion, and Love rarely interrupted his Meals. Supper being ended, he gave himſelf up a Prey to Grief & Melancholy, nor was this gloomy Cloud diſperſed till the following Morn; when the ever truſty Shoebuy came to pay his accuſtomed Duty to his Friend and Maſter, he found the Loveſick Youth on his Bed, his Eyes ſwolln with Tears, as if he had lately incurred the Diſpleaſure of a Severe Scholmaſter and ſubmitted to the Diſcipline of the Rod. He enquired the Cauſe of his Maſter's Grief, and ſoon found it was owing to *Ragabella's* Interview with the Soldier. He then informed *Crack* that this Grenadier was *Ragabel-*

*la's*

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la's only Brother, once the Darling of his Parents, and Hopes of the Family, who through an exorbitant Thirst of Glory had quitted the sedentary Employment of a Taylor, and had some time eloped from his Friends, but had now permission to pay them a visit in his Regimentals, and raise Contributions on the Family. At this Relation *Crack* became more pacified he lamented his hasty Credulity, and blamed himself for harbouring the least suspicion to the Prejudice of *Ragabella's* Virtue. He likewise thought his sudden Disappearance at the Sight of the Soldier, might be interpreted as an Action of Timidity, and unbecoming the Character of a Lover. A Lover should be all Hero, bold and enterprizing, resolute to encounter all Difficulties to obtain the Object beloved. Revolving thote things in his Mind, and fearing his late Conduct might lessen him in *Ragabella's* Esteem, he wrote the following Letter.

Adorable Lady!

' My sudden Retreat from your Presence yesterday, proceeded from Grief, not Fear; I should deserve to be branded  
ed



## STROLABELLA

' ed with Pusillanimity should I fly from  
 ' any Man, becaule he has a Supereminence  
 ' of Stature. I could not bear to see my  
 ' Lovely Fair, in Company with a Person  
 ' whom I then supposed to be my Rival;  
 ' I am since informed he is your Brother,  
 ' when I am assured he is not at Home, I  
 ' shall embrace the Opportunity of declar-  
 ' ing myself

your eternal Slave and Admirer.

This Letter was received by *Ragabella*  
 with all the marks of Tenderness & Affection;  
 she kist it with her Coral Lips, & when  
 she read it. she lodged it in her snowy Bosom.  
 From this day Mr. *Crack's* visits were frequent,  
 but always in the Grenadiers absence;  
 when this impertinent Brother was with her;  
 he was obliged to content himself with looking  
 on this fair Production of Nature; about this  
 time an honest Fellow had set up a Cook's shop  
 opposite to *Ragabella's*; here was a secure retreat  
 for *Crack*, here he could feast his Eyes, & fill  
 his Belly, without fear or dread. His Amours  
 went on very successfully for several months;  
 at length the God of Love, the little wanton

Deity

## A Comical ROMANCE.

Deity, who delights to sport with Puny Mortals; threw a Dart from *Ragabella's* Eye, which transfix'd a Noblemans Footman to the Heart. This Spark in Livery fell passionately in Love; he soon discovered *Crack* to be his Rival, and immediately set his Wits to work how he might disgrace him, and remove him from College: The Plot he laid was malicious & effectual; Skip had an Intrigue with the Daughter of *Crack's* Laundrels, which terminated in a Pregnancy; by the management of Skip it was rumour'd about that she had declared *Crack* to be the sole Author of her misfortune, and the Instrument of bringing her to this apparent shame: She imagined by this wicked Imputation to get a sum of Money from *Crack* and his Friends, to set up her and her intended Husband in an Alehouse: The thing was practicable, and she knew Instances of the like Nature. Upon this accusation of her's, *Crack* received the congratulations of his Acquaintance, not without some Encomiums on so early a proof of his Manhood; which were no way pleasing to him; Repeated complements on this affair teized him & vexed him to such

## STROLABELLA.

a degree, that he determined to leave College without any Ceremony; but not without clearing himself of the Aspersions & defending his Innocence to his dear *Ragabella*. He found his charmer reposed on a Couch, he placed himself by her, & while he was embracing her with the utmost Innocence and Affection; the unfortunate Lovers were surprized by *Ragabella's* Brother, who with an unexampled cruelty disfigured the most Beautiful Countenance in the World. The Eyes of *Ragabella* which delighted all Beholders, were in an Instant sealed up, Her Teeth were driven out of their Sockets, & *Crack's* Nose laid even with his Face; all this Barbarity was executed by a Basket hilted Sword in the hands of a Russian.

Behold here a sudden Revolution! *Crack* in the morning thought himself the happiest Man alive, at Noon he was disgraced by a Whore, and at Night defaced by a Bully. Being unable to oppose such a Torrent of misfortunes, he got his Nose put into some tolerable order, and privately took himself from College the next Morning.

## A Comical ROMANCE.

### CHAP. VIII.

#### *A Continuation of Crack's History.*

SOME Months after *Crack* left College, having some Interest in the Navy, he was entertained on board one of his Majesty's Ships of War, in the station of Midshipman; here he continued several years, & having once fought a Duel with success, he got the Reputation of a brave Fellow. In process of time he entirely forgot *Ragabella*; he was much improved in his stature & a Man of Gallantry & Intrigue. He addicted himself more to Poetry than Navigation, and commenced Amours in every Port he came to. At length where the Ship was ordered to be paid off, he fell in Love with three Ladies at once viz. A Seamstress, a Ribbon Weaver, and a Glove-washer. He wrote Letters in the same Words to all three; but his Perfidy was soon detected. His three Mistresses one day met together, *Crack* was the subject of their conversation; One of them read a Letter, the others found it verbally the same with that which each of them received; this palpable Falshood exasperated them to the highest degree. The



## STROLABELLA,

Semstrels menaced Death and destruction ; she communicated the affair to her Brother, who was a Stout Ship carpenter in the K's. Yard; he no sooner heard of the Indignity offered to his Sister, but he vow'd revenge, and swore if *Crack* did not repair the injury by Marriage, he would Emasculate him with his Mallet & Chisel. However he did not keep his Diabolical resolution so much a secret, but *Crack* had friendly notice of it, and being determined not to be Hector'd into Matrimony against his Inclination ; or be deprived of his Virility in so ridiculous a manner; as soon as the Ship was paid off, he immediately made the best of his way. And now having Leisure to reflect on the ill success of his Amours, his Nose almost irreparably ruin'd by one Brother, and in danger of being more inhumanly treated by another; He thought to give over prosecuting any more Love adventures, especially if there was a Brother in the case. He travelled sometime like a Gentleman; at length finding his money almost exhausted, at a great distance from his Friends, not knowing where to have a fresh supply, he got himself admitted among the *Vagrantes*. Here

he

## A Comical ROMANCE.

he found the Lovely *Strolabella*, he thought her a Temptation too great for Human Nature to resist, and having enquired whether she had a Brother, being answered in the Negative; he professed himself her admirer. I cannot conclude this part of Mr. *Crack's* History without observing that he was far from discovering any Avarice or Ambition in his Amours. As he was born and educated a Gentleman he ought to have Soar'd higher, but he was certainly the most modest Man alive in his Pretensions to the fair Sex. I must likewise inform the Reader, that *Crack* was not this Gentlemans real Name, nor was it assumed by himself, but conferr'd on him by others: Not because as was Frequently reported, he received a Knock in the Cradle, but quite the reverse; his Intellects were suppoed to be impaired by his profound Literature, and his Skull incapable of containing his Superabundant knowledge. He did not move in the Ordinary Sphere, his actions were Excentrical, his Sentiments so exalted, and his Expressions so Sublime, that I have reason to believe him to be strongly Influenced by the Planet *Luna*. Fortune however giddy & in-

## STROLABELLA,

constant, was *Crack's* constant Adversary, no Man was more us'd to her Frowns, and no Man less regarded them. And I have often thought *Crack* merited a better fate. Indeed I must begg Mr. *Crack's* pardon, if after allowing him more Wit & Learning than are generally found among the *Vagrantes*, I cannot by any means allow him common Sense; but this is a Jewel rarely to be met with, and more uncommon than People imagine. I leave him at Present making Love to *Strolabella*; and now proceed to *Spout* his formidable Rival.

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### CHAP. IX.

#### *A Description of Spout the Tragedian.*

**S**POUT was the Flower of *Strolero's* Flock, and incomparably the best Actor among them; if *Truncheon* was the best figure, *Spout* had the best Lungs, though his Voice was Stentorphonically loud, it was sweet and musical. *Spout* appeared Daily as well drest in the streets, as a Tavern Drawer in the Park on a Sunday. He was the only one among the *Vagrantes* who conversed with Gentlemen; *Strolero* was reckoned by them

## A Comical ROMANCE.

them a meer Hog, *Truncheon* an Hypochondriac, *Crack* a Madman, and *Spout* an hearty Bottle Companion. It is certain, *Spout* knew how to behave among Gentlemen, as if he had been used to them from his Infancy: Though he was very diverting to his Superiours, he was often Intolent to his Brethren, he look'd upon the *Vagrantes* with an Eye of contempt; but this was only by starts, and generally the effect of E-briety. There was one thing very remarkable in his Conversation, which was this, that Quantity of Liquour which would intoxicate another Man's Parts and Understanding made *Spout* more Learned & Wise; there was not a Person in the Universe of more extensive Knowledge than *Spout* in his Cups. In this humour he was for ever disputing with *Crack*, where he had always the Advantage of him, for when *Crack* was ply'd with halt a dozen Glasses, he was more unintelligible than a Welch Mountaineer, talking English in a Passion. *Spout* would pervert the whole Order of Nature, turn the Stars out of their proper Hemispheres, and fix the Sun's Meridian at the North Pole. He knew the secret History of  
the



## STROLABELLA.

the most celebrated Heroes of the Age, King *Theodore* and he were fellow Apprentices, and both work'd as Journeymen to *Thomas Couli Can*, whom he could prove to have been some years ago a Barber to Drurylane Play-house. He affirmed that this Prodigy of the Eastern World had learnt the Art of War from the Stage, and the first Time he had any Notions of a Military Life was when he tumbled out of the Belly of the Trojan Horse in *Lee's* Booth at Southwark Fair. This extravagant talk was once the Occasion of sowing the Seeds of Discord between him and *Crack*, which would have ended in a bloody Boxing match, if they had not awakened in a more Pacific Humour, than when they went to Bed : Sobriety gave each of them another turn of Thought, and the Affair was soon amicably made up to their mutual Satisfaction in a Gin shop. *Spout* being a very good Actor, the Love Scenes frequently between him and *Strotabella*; she had acquired an extraordinary Regard for him, But *Spout* was a Gentleman of such Temper, that he thought the finest Woman in the Universe was not to be brought in Competition with the

juice

## A Comical ROMANCE.

Age, juice of the Grape; He used Wine as a Pre-  
lude to Love, and seldom visited *Strolabella*  
till he had drank a Bottle or two: He was  
very Eloquent in his Cups, and spoke best  
without Premeditation. He pleased *Strola-*  
*bella* more with his careless negligent man-  
ner, than *Truncheon* with his Complaisance,  
Or *Crack* with his Flattery. She look'd up-  
on *Spout* as a Rake, a very amiable charact-  
er in the Eyes of the unthinking part of  
Womankind: But he fell afterwards into  
disgrace with *Strolabella*, as I shall take No-  
tice of in a proper Place: In the mean while  
Humanity calls upon me to relieve Mr.  
*Truncheon* from his Irksome Confinement,  
and bring him out to breathe the open Air.

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### C H A P. X.

*Contains the manner of Travelling among  
the Vagrantes, with some diverting Occur-  
rences on the Road.*

**M**R. *Truncheon* was by this time cured  
of the *Scrubado*, *Ragamuffina* during  
his Illness attended him, not only with the  
Affiduity of a Nurse, but even with the  
affection of a Wife; He was in good Order

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for Travelling. *Strolero's* Company were preparing for another Place, one of the largest Cities of the Kingdom, where they proposed to take up their Winter quarters. At their setting out, *Strolabella* & *Ragamuffina* were seated in one Cart, which was strongly guarded by *Spout*, *Truncheon* and *Crack*. *Spout* being a Man of of Taste, walk'd with a Stick taller than himself; *Truncheon* was compleatly Arm'd, with a Theatrical Foil, a pair of Pistols without Locks used by Captain *Macheath* in the *Beggar's Opera*, & a Truncheon concealed in his Breast; *Crack* walked with a Fishing-rod in his Hand, & a Pipe in his mouth. That they might want no Refreshment on the Road, *Ragamuffina* had a Bottle of Rum in her Lap, & *Strolabella* a whole Alphabet of Gingerbread. They entertained each other on the Road, with several diverting Songs; there is not a set of merrier mortals breathing than the *Vagrantes*. This Gaiety which had lasted for half a dozen Miles, was then interrupted by a Person on Horse-back, exceedingly well mounted, and riding up to *Spout* who had an admirable Skill in *Physiognomy*; he knew the Professions of People by their Countenances

## A Comical ROMANCE.

Countenances, and discovered by his Art, that this Gentleman was a modern Knight Errant; One who had granted himself a Licence to raise contributions on the Publick. This Person asked *Spout*, which way he was travelling? *Spout* immediately replied far from the Question, Sir, we are Players; Players, said the Stranger, why then give me a *Tragedy speech*: *Spout* with an uncommon pretence of Mind, address'd him in this manner, viz :

*Angels, & Ministers of Grace, defend us!  
Art thou a Spirit of Health, or Goblin  
damn'd?  
Bring'st with thee Airs from Heav'n? or  
Blasts from Hell,  
Thou com'st in such a Questionable shape,  
I will speak to Thee, &c.*

The Highwayman being convinced of *Spout's* sincerity, and knowing no Precedent for robbing a Player, presented *Spout* with half a Crown to drink his Health, and as he was riding off, *Ragamuffina* desired him to take a Dram, which was kindly accepted; But while the Bottle was at his Mouth, this bloody minded Woman made a signal

G

to



## STROLABELLA,

to *Truncheon* to knock him off his Horse; But *Truncheon* was a Gentleman of nice Sentiments of Honour, and as he never heard that any of the *Vagrantes*, had ever received an Injury from the Gentlemen of the Road, he suffered him to proceed on his Adventures without any molestation. The Highwayman had not rode above an hundred yards, when his Horse startled, and had not the Master been a very expert Rider, he had inevitably fallen to the Ground; this Timidity of the Horse, it seems, was occasioned by the sight of *Buskin*, who was very gravely stalking before an other Cart, which conveyed his Wife with a sucking Child, and the aged *Strolabunda*. The bold Adventurer being pretty well acquainted with *Plays*, accosts *Buskin* in these Words.

*Approach thou like the rugged Russian Bear,  
The arm'd Rhinoceros, or the Hircanian  
Tyger;*

*Take any shape but that, and my brave Horse  
shall never flinch.* ~~~

Sir, says *Buskin*, excellently well spoken for a Gentleman, though but so, so, for an Actor. Pray Sir, says the Highwayman, are  
you

## A Comical ROMANCE.

you related to young *Hamlet* I spoke with  
just now? yes Sir, says *Buskin*, I have the  
Honour to be his Father's Ghost; upon my  
Soul (says the Highwayman) an excellent  
Figure for a Ghost, though but so, so, for  
the Ghost of a King; I really took you for  
the Apparition of an honest Comerade of  
mine, who was some time ago suspended at  
*Tyburn*, and afterwards sent to take the Air  
on *Hounslow Heath*: Mr. *Buskin* answered  
in a Tragedy Tone, I am indeed untortu-  
nate, but not asham'd of being so. Pray Sir  
(says our Knight Errant) who are these  
Ladies riding in State? I suppose the elder  
is mother *Shipton*; No Sir, says *Buskin*; she  
is one of the Witches in *Macbeth*, who flies  
by Night; and the other is Queen *Eliza-  
beth*; why then I warrant you (quoth the  
Highwayman) the young Princess to whom  
she administers her Royal Nipple, is the  
Product of her Amours with the Earl of  
*Essex*; you are mistaken (says *Buskin*) she  
is my lawful Spouse, and I myself represent  
the Haughty Earl of *Southampton*. The  
Highwayman perceiving a string to *Buskin's*  
Hat, after the manner of a Sailor's, to secure  
it from the Wind; says to him, my Lord,

## STROLABELLA,

I observe you have a very odd way of wearing your Garter, for it is fix'd to your Hat instead of your Leg; pray Sir (replies *Buskin*) I desire you will talk with a little more Respect of my Garter; you don't know but it is part of the very Ribbon your Comerade wore, during his Suspension at *Tyburn*. The Robber perceiving *Buskin* to be a Man of Wit and Humour, presented the tucking Princels his Daughter, with a Piece of Silver, then lets loose the Reins of his Bridle, the Horse flew swift as the Wind, and both Man and Beast were invisible in a Moment.

The foremost Cart had all this while been waiting for *Buskin's*, and the Company being now close together, this Adventure entertained them the remaining part of the day, till they arrived at their Inn. *Ragamuffina* curs'd *Truncheon* for not obeying her signal; *Strolabella* applauded him, for suffering the Gentleman to make his Escape, and vow'd it was Pity so comely a Person should be brought to disgrace; *Truncheon* said, as he was born and bred a Gentleman, he would not debase his Birth, and dishonour his Education for the Name of a Thief-catcher:

*Spout*

*Spout*  
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## A Comical ROMANCE.

*Spout* was Mightily pleas'd at the Half Crown, and swore he believed he had din'd with him once in *Clare-market*, and that he was the famous *Turpin*: *Crack* said he liked him so well, that he wou'd compose a Dying Speech, and an Elegy for him & have them in readiness against the Assizes, when he did not doubt, but the Gentleman would have occasion for them: *Buskin* had very grateful Sentiments of the Present to his Child, which was a *Queen Ann's* shilling; but, though in other respects a Man of very good Sense, he was so entirely ignorant as to the Value & Denomination of any Coin but Copper, his Wife being always Purse-bearer; that he took it for a Coronation Medal.

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### C H A P. XI.

*An Account of Harlequino, and several passages at the Inn.*

W H E N they arrived at the Inn, they met with *Harlequino*, whom they imagined by this Time had been at his Journey's end; for he was sent some days before to get the Stage in order, and put up the Scenes,



## STROLABELLA

Scenes, being a very useful Person on such Occasions. But it seems *Harlequino* was so delighted with the Scituation of this Village, that he had taken a Prospect of it, & being very Ingenious with his Pencil, he was preparing a Sketch to present to some generous Gentleman, from whom he might expect an Handsome Return. *Harlequino* was the most Universal Actor living, he had Travelled through all Countries, and had Acted on every Stage in the known World. He was throughly acquainted with their whole Catalogue, and had played every Character in Tragedy, Comedy, Farce, Opera and Pantomime Entertainment. Nay, he could act the part of a Brute, as well as that of a Man, and he personated a Dog to Admiration : His Genius even extended beyond the Limits of Mortality ; No man could represent a Skeleton more naturally, or act Death more to the Life. He was not only an Actor, but a maker of Actors ; I have heard he once compleated a whole Company of them, out of no other Materials than an old Elbow Chair, and a broken Jointstool ; The Grand Court of *France*, the Devil and Doctor *Faustus*, the Blacka-

moor

## A Comical ROMANCE.

moor Lady, the little Tumbler, Punch, Joan,  
 such Wheelbarrow and all, were carved out the  
 as for same Wood, and the Workmanship of the  
 Vil- same Hands. *Harlequino*, during his stay in  
 it, & this little Town, found the People very de-  
 l, he sirsous of seeing a Play ; therefore he pre-  
 some pared a Theatic against the Arrival of the  
 night *Actors* ; He likewise provided a Dinner for  
*quino* them, and as *Harlequino* was a great Admir-  
 e had er of Soop, he cooked up some excellent  
 had Mutton Broth, made out of that part of  
 World, the Sheep, which had the Honour when  
 their alive to wear the Horns. The Host of the  
 every Inn was a very civil Gentleman, he congra-  
 t, O- tulated the safe Arrival of his Guests, pre-  
 Nay, sented them each with a Dram, & conduct-  
 ell as ed them into the Dining Room: As he was  
 og to returning to the Kitchen, he espyed *Buskin*,  
 d be- who had lag'd behind and was just entring  
 man the Door ; taking him by his Habit, to be  
 rally, of the Order of Mendicants, he accosts him  
 s not in this manner, *Pray Friend call by and by,*  
 s ; I *the Gentlemen and Ladies have not Dined*  
 whole yet, and at present we have nothing for you;  
 ater- *Pray Friend*, replies *Buskin*, *tell the Gentle-*  
 oken *men and Ladies if they Dine without me, I*  
 ance, *shall take it very ill, but in the first Place,*  
 acka- give  
 moor

## STROLABELLA.

*give me a Dram*; *Harlequino* hearing the Voice of *Buskin*, immediately ran to embrace him, desiring the Landlord to let him have a Dram of the best, then whispered him that his Name was *Buskin*, a celebrated Actor, a man of infinite Humour & worth Money; but generally travelled in Disguise for the Security of his Person & his Wealth. Mr. *Buskin* having taken off his Dram, followed *Harlequino* into the Dining Room, where they all fell to eating in an amicable manner. After Dinner they began to consult about a Play; being not a little puzzled how to proceed for want of Cloaths and Scenes, for these passed through the Day before, with *Strolero* & some others of the Company. *Harlequino* proposed to them the Comic part of the *Spanish Fryar*, as requiring the fewest Actors, and most easily dressed. He told them there was an Officer's Valet in the House very well dressed, he would borrow his Cloaths for Mr. *Truncheon*, who was to act the part of the Colonel; That *Strolabella* had nothing to do but to pull off her Bed Gown, and put on her Hoop to be dressed well enough for *Elvira*; As for Mr. *Buskin* the Fryar, if the Ladies would

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

would but lend their Assistance, he would dress him better than ever he appeared on the Stage in *Drury Lane*: that Madam *Strolabunda* had a very handsome plain black Petticoat, and *Ragamuffina* a quilted one; he hoped he had not followed the Business of Acting so long but out of two Petticoats, he could make a Fryar's Gown: As for himself who was to play *Gomez* his own black Waistcoat and Breeches with *Strolabella's* short Cloak would do effectually: And for the other characters the Gentlemen might play them in their own wearing Apparel; He was very well assured they would at least get Money enough to defray the Expences of their Journey, and if they would walk into the yard with him he would shew them the Play-house. Encouraged by *Harlequino*, they immediately resolv'd to post Bills to advertise the People that they were to Act the *Spanish Fryar* that Evening.

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# STROLABELLA,

## CHAP. XII.

*A Description of Harlequino's Theatre with the Success of the Play, and a Grand Scuffle.*

THE Company of *Strolers* followed *Harlequino* into the Theatre, which was a commodious Barn; the Stage was a spacious Threshing floor, elevated upon Turf placed in a regular manner: The Pit, Boxes, and Gallery, were laid together on this Occasion, and the Benches were a dozen of Norweyan Deals fixed upon Butter firkins: The Scenes were made of fine Clay; the Branches were Sticks transverse & Suspended by packthread: As for Scenes they had only two Wings & a Flat, the Curtains of a Bed serv'd for the first, and an old Skreen made an admirable Back-scene. *Ragamuffina* having nothing to do in the Play, was order'd to take Money, *Spout* and *Crack* were Overseers. Within four hour after their arrival, the Benches were full, the Actors dress'd, the Stage Illuminated, the Candles snuffed and every thing in order to begin. No Person ever made a more Grotesque Figure, than *Buskin* in the character of Father

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

ther *Dominic: Strolabunda's* plain Petticoat, concealed him from the Hips downwards, and *Ragamuffina's* quilted one, from the Neck to the Hips; his Hands and Arms shew'd themselves through the Pocket holes of the quilted Petticoat, the sleeves of his Gown were a pair of Black stockings, which had formerly Feet, but *Buskin* had for some time made use of one of them to put his Parts in; and the other to hold his Proven-der: His Cheeks were flush'd with red-lead and stuf't with Tobacco: The oddity of his Dress, and the manner of his Acting, exceedingly diverted the Spectators: *Truncheon*, played the Colonel with unusual Vivacity, and made a very Handsome appearance in in the *Valet de Chambre's* Cloaths; *Strolabella* was the delight of every Eye: *Harlequino* who performed the part of *Gomez*, outdid his Usual Outdoings, he entred into Character at once and preserved it to Admiration, he acted the old Jealous *Huncks* so naturally, that though the Poet does not make him a Cuckold, the Audience could not forbear wishing him one. The Play was going on to every Body's Satisfaction but *Ragamuffina's*, she had taken a Dram

## STROLABELLA,

or two at the Door, and being always a turbulent Woman in her Liquor, she look'd upon *Truncheon* and *Strolabella* with an evil Eye; she imagined She had never seen *Truncheon* exert himself so much before, that he was possessed with a real Passion for *Strolabella*, when he was only to love her in Fiction, she thought *Strolabella* reciprocally touch'd; she could not contain herself, as soon as the Colonel and Elvira had finished the Scene which gave her this uneasiness and Torture, she flew with the utmost Fury into that part of the Theatre called the Dressing Room, attack'd *Strolabella's* Cap in an unmerciful manner, swore she would spoil their Sport; she then rush'd on *Father Dominic*, seiz'd him by the Throat, and threatned that instant to stop the Circulation of his Blood, if he did not immediately surrender the Quilted Petticoat; *Buskin* would willingly have excused himself from undressing, but was obliged to submit. By this time *Spout* and *Crack* were come from the Door, to *Strolabella's* assistance; *Ragamuffina* had not only assaulted her Person, but also her Reputation, without mincing the matter she called her broad

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

Whore. The injured *Strolabella* bore those Indignities with an unprecedented Patience; and the hardest Expression she made use of in this Conflict, was uttered in these tender and Pathetic Words, viz: *Hussy, you are an old, ugly, nasty, rotten, stinking, Brandy-nos'd, Brimstone B* — *ch. Truncheon* hearing the Word *Brimstone*, was touch'd to the Quick, he concluded *Strolabella* intended it as a Reflection on *Ragamuffina's* Care and Attendance, during his late Illness; however he was too brave a Man to lift up his Hand against a Woman, therefore was going to revenge himself on *Spout* and *Crack*, but here the Valet obstructed him, by whispering him, Sir, if you have a mind to Box pray strip, for by G--d I will not have my Cloaths Spoiled, therefore along with me, then takes *Truncheon* with him into the Inn; *Ragamuffina* followed and, all was hush'd in a Moment. *Spout* made an handsome Apology to the Audience and sung two or three Duettes with *Strolabella*; *Harlequino* likewise gave 'em an Humorous Song, and an Outlandish Dance. The good natured People thought they had Diversion enough for their Money, and departed to their



## STROLABELLA

their respective Homes very well fatisfyed.

### C H A P. XIII.

*An Entertaining Conversation between Spout, Crack and Strolabella, including a material Point of Strolabella's good Breeding which can not be omitted.*

**M**R. Truncheon being divested by the Officer's Valet withdrew with *Ragamuffina* to another Inn, who was very much Plumed at her Conquest; He entirely devoted himself to her Service, and *Strolabella* from this moment look'd on him with an Eye of Contempt. The Amiable Virgin waited on *Strolabunda* to the Place of Repose, and returned to *Spout* and *Crack* designing to divert herself an Hour with the delightful Conversation of her Lovers; She did not scruple to take her Glass freely having an entire Confidence in the Gentlemen with whom she was engaged. *Crack* was seated on her Right side, and *Spout* on Her Left; she desired neither of them to take offence, that if the Right side was the place of Honour, the left was nearest the Heart: So cautious was she of disobliging either of

her

## A Comical ROMANCE.

her Lovers, that while *Crack* saluted Her, she squeeze'd *Spout* by the hand; and when *Spout* pressed her Lips, she would amorously tread on *Crack's* Toes. The Rivals were determined to exert their utmost Power to be agreeable to her, and she was resolved to be as entertaining to them. *Crack* after expressing himself with all the Energy of Affection suitable to the Vehemence of his Passion, wrote the following Lines.

*Oh Strolabella! with a tender Eye,  
Reward my Passion, or behold me die;  
I feel the Force of Love, it's Power confess,  
I can't admire you more, nor love you less.*

*Spout* resolved not to appear inferior to his Rival in Wit and Delicacy, address'd his Mistress with an Extempore Song.

*Oh lovely charming Bella!  
Whose Beauties pierce my Heart,  
No Tongue my Pain can tell,  
Nor Words express the smart.  
I'll sing like Farinello  
And tune thy Soul to Love.  
Crack at my Voice turns yellow,  
And envies me by Jove.*

*Stro.*

## STROLABELLA.

*Strolabella* protested she was never so embarras'd in her Life, that she was enamour'd with each of them to such a degree, she could not tell to whom she should give the Preference; she was that Instant afflicted with a Pain she never felt before, but whether it was Love or the Cholic, Time must determine. Her Passion soon discovered itself to be nothing but Wind, the Explosion crimson'd her Cheeks and surpriz'd her Lovers. *Crack* the best natur'd Man alive, willing to spare a Virgin's Blushes, took the Indecency on himself, presented the Lady with his Snuff-box, beseeching Pardon for the unmannerly Discharge. *Spout* rallied his Rival on his Breeding and good Manners, that certainly such excellent Music must be vastly entertaining to the young Lady, therefore he begg'd leave to call *Enchore*. *Strolabella* reproved *Spout* for bearing too hard on a Gentleman for an Infirmary which the Politest Person might be sometimes liable to, that a Roman Emperor had been celebrated for his Indulgence to his Subjects in cases of this Nature, she could not charge her memory with his Name, but she believed it was either *Claudius* or Pope *Gregory*;

## A Comical ROMANCE.

that the *Hollanders*, the best bred People in the Universe had such Innocent and Salubrious reports of Nature in great Estimation: Gratitude had tipp'd her Tongue with Eloquence: and she would have made an *Harangue* on this important Subject, which would have perpetuated her Fame to latest Posterity, but being interrupted by a return of her disorder, the bashful Maiden modestly withdrew.

*Spout* was now left to the management of his Rival, who ply'd him Cup after Cup, He pour'd down the Hotpot in such abundance, that he lost the use of speech: He took his repose in an Elbow chair. *Crack* retired to Bed, lull'd to Rest with contemplating on the various Perfections of the Matchless *Strolabella*.

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### C H A P. XIV.

*Contains the last days Travelling, with some material Occurrences on the Road.*

ON the Morn at dawn of Light *Ragamuffina* having procured a double Horse, was equip'd for her Journey; *Trunccheon* riding before her. *Strolabella* had now

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## STROLABELLA,

a Cart to herself, accompanied by *Spout* & *Crack* a Lover walking on each side. *Spout* quite stupid with the last Nights debauch and soon fatigued, intreated *Strolabella* to indulge him with a seat in the Cart; The charming Nymph, a miracle of sweetness & good Temper condescended to his request: He reposed his Head on *Strolabella's* Knees a freedom which was by no means pleasing to *Crack*, but that he might not have cause to believe this Familiarity should prejudice him in his Love; while *Spout* was sleeping, *Strolabella* conversed with *Crack* in the Language of the Eyes, her Ogles were vastly expressive and seem'd to give an indubitable demonstration of the sincerity of her affection. *Truncheon's* attachment to *Ragamuffina* had for ever divorced him from *Strolabella*, and *Crack* had no Competitor to dread but *Spout*. And now the Moment approaches in which *Spout* falls into the utmost disgrace, his misfortunes I hope will be a warning to Lovers; a Lesson to avoid Intemperance and Nightly excesses. The jolting of the Cart occasioned the vast quantity of Liquids he had so lately drank, to Operate; and not having it in his Power

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

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to shew a due regard to decency and Love, he Calcaded abundantly in *Strolabella's* Lap. The delicate Lady quite sick with the nauseous Torrent, implored *Crack's* assistance, to disengage her from so filthy a Monster. *Crack* obedient to the gentle call of Love, opened his Arms to receive her. He felt ineffable Joy, he was as happy as he could desire; he had her now entirely in his care: They walk'd with conjunctive hands, *Crack* all the way ridiculing *Spout*, and avowing his own pretensions. *Strolabella* grew tired with walking, and at the first Village procur'd a Horse for herself and Lover; They rode for some Hours exceedingly delighted with each other, their whole talk was Love, she had an admirable notion of that Passion, a fine Romantic turn of thought; & expressed herself on this subject as a Person not only well skill'd in the Theory but even in the Practic part; not that she herself had ever tasted the delicious poyson, but really when she talk'd of Love, she could not forbear speaking with a simplicity of diction bordering on Obscenity: But this I take to be the prejudice of Education. From her discourse a Person would imagine her an easie conquest,

## STROLABELLA,

conquest, but her virtue repell'd all attacks, and *Crack* was charm'd with her Accents: whilst he was listening to the Melodious Syren, the Horse stumbled, & the amorous Couple fell to the Ground; the Titubation of the Beast had placed *Strolabella* in a position which will not admit of description. *Crack* did not even attempt to raile her, all his Faculties were lost in Admiration. *Strolabella* was thus far fortunate in her Fall, that her Countenance was entirely veil'd so that her Blushes were concealed from her Lover; when she had recover'd her disorder she look'd on *Crack* with Rage & Indignation. *Pray Madam* (said he) *why so much Lightning in your Eyes?* She reply'd in an angry Tone, *could my Eyes flash Lightning, yours had been struck blind before this fatal Accident befall me: But since it has exposed me to your Mirth, let me not be the Subject of your Ridicule.* *Crack* in Rapture answered, the Subject of my Ridicule! No Madam, so far from that, you shall be the Object of my Adoration. Oh thou transcendant Charmer! thou hast opened unto me an unimagin'd Mine of solid Joy. *Oh let me rush up on thee in a Storm of Love, and beat down*

*thy*

## A Comical ROMANCE.

*thy Guard of Honour all before me.* Whilst he was expressing himself thus in Transport, the Person who own'd the Horse was come up to the Amorous Pair, *Strolabella* thinking him a more expert Rider than *Crack*, entrusted herself to his Care, the remainder of the Journey; and left her Lover to enjoy the Plentitude of Imagination, by ruminating on the Auspicious Adventures of the Day. *Crack* had *Strolabella* always before him, his creating Fancy presented her Image to his View; An ardent desire of Fruition chac'd away all Platonic Ideas, it caus'd an Ebullition in his Blood; He imagined in her Arms an Heaven of Bliss, and was impatient to obtain the Ecstatic Joy. In his Walk he overtook *Buskin*, who had stray'd away from his Company and had been regaling on a Sallad collected in the neighbouring Ditch, and refreshing himself on the pure limpid stream. A clamorous Wife and a sqawling Brat, had oblig'd this Gentleman to seek for Comfort in Solitude. But meeting with *Crack*, their Conversation was altogether employ'd in the Praise and Reproaches of Women. *Crack* representing 'em as Creatures of an Angelic mold,

and



## STROLABELLA.

and *Buskin* cursing the whole Sex. The one displaying his Rhetoric in enumerating the Pleasures of the Nuptial Paradite, the other representing it as a Terrestrial Hell. Mrs. *Buskin* it seems, had either carelessly Spilt or ungenerously Swallowed the very Brandy that was bought for their mutual support on their Journey, by which means she had exasperated her Husband to the highest pitch of Fury and Desperation, *Crack* allay'd the Tempest of his mind by presenting him a Cordial out of a Vial which he always us'd in Travelling. *Buskin* had grateful sentiments of *Crack's* Generosity, and was soon persuaded to a Reconciliation. They soon got up with the Carts, Mr. *Spout* was restor'd to Sobriety, Mrs. *Buskin* rejoic'd at the sight of her Husband, and at the Approach of Night they arriv'd in decent Order to their Journey's End.

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### C H A P. XV.

*Crack* Entertained by *Strolabella*, affronted by *Strolero* on account of his Riches: *Buskin* abus'd by *Spout*, *Spout* beaten; *Strolabella* and her Lovers turn'd out of the Inn,

## A Comical ROMANCE.

*Inn, and repair to the Bear and ragged Staff.*

**S**TROLABELLA had employed a person to watch *Crack's* arrival, and to conduct him to her Lodgings. Here *Crack* found an agreeable Repast prepared for him, but the Lovers were soon interrupted by *Strolero* and *Spout*: *Strolero* observing an Entertainment no way suitable to the Parsimony of his Temper; with his usual Humanity, advised the Master of the House to be upon his Guard, that the Gentlemen of his Company were a sort of People who called for every thing and paid for nothing. *Crack* was at a loss how to behave, he could not openly resent this Indignity in Regard of his relation to his dear *Strolabella*. He imagin'd the Landlord might give Credit to *Strolero's* words, and regard him as a wretch infected with the Contagion of the Times, and afflicted with base scandalous Poverty. Happy was it for *Crack* that he was now in the Zenith of his Prosperity, he expoted his Golden Treasure to publick view it was dignified with a royal Impression, & equal in value to the eight part of a *Moy-dore*, *Strolero* could scarce believe his Eyes

## STROLABELLA

He swore he had been twenty years director of a Company, and never met with such an astonishing Instance of a Player's Frugality: He even presumed to call *Crack's* Honesty in Question, with some Imputations on the conduct of *Strolabella*, He charged her with pledging her Mother's Jewels to raise this immense sum for her Lover to make him appear considerable in the Eyes of the World. *Strolabella* prettily replied if she lov'd a Gentleman to the degree her Father would insinuate, she would first present him with her Person, and then he had a just Title to every thing else. *Strolero* enraged at this, loaded her with Reproaches and took himself away.

*Spout* though he entered the House with him, did not follow him out; He presented *Strolabella* with his Snuff-box, she took a Pinch and returned it with a Bow. *Spout* then address'd himself to the Gentlewoman of the House, he enquired after the Temper of the People of the City, and whither their Inclinations led them to encourage Theatrical Diversions? she answered that formerly she had known Players get a vast deal of Money here, but that now-a-days Peo-

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

ple had not much to spare, and they who  
 had Money, had other ways of laying it out;  
 she believed a good Company for a Month  
 or two might do very well: But if they  
 expected any Business, the first Step she  
 would advise them to, should be to confine  
 the Master, for if they suffered themselves  
 to be governed by a Mad-man, they would  
 make but a foolish story of it. Whilst they  
 were talking of this affair, a Message was  
 brought to *Strolabella* from her Grandmo-  
 ther, to acquaint her she had private Lodg-  
 ings ready for her, and had been some  
 Hours expecting her; *Strolabella* sent her  
 Excuse that she was fatigued, and undress'd,  
 and could not that Night remove from the  
 Inn. The Person who condescended to  
 bring this Message was Mr. *Buskin*; as soon  
 as he was gone, the Landlady asked *Spout*  
 what post in the Company that Man might  
 be employed in? *Spout* asham'd to own him  
 to be upon the level with himself, replied  
 that the Man was an harmless honest Fel-  
 low, and an out Pensioner belonging to  
*Kilmainham*, and Candleinuffer to the Com-  
 pany: This Discourte was overheard by  
*Buskin*, who instantly returned, and with a  
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## STROLABELLA,

very composed Countenance cast his Eyes on *Spout*, telling him, he knew him to be a Scoundrel, and therefore as he could not give him Gentleman's Satisfaction, he would chastise him in a proper manner; with that he lends *Spout* two or three Blows with his Stick, and leaves the House with the Gravity of a Statesman, and the Temper of a Philosopher. The Landlord having been witness of so much disorder, in so little a time, and concluding they were all mad, brought in his Bill without being called for, and told them his Beds were taken up by other sort of Guests, therefore he gave them timely notice to seek for Lodging somewhere else: He added if they enquired at the Bear and Ragged Staff, they might find Accomodations suitable to their Quality; the Man who kept the House had been used to such sort of People, and knew better how to deal with them than any One else. This was a great Mortification to be disgraced in this manner on their first arrival, however the Reckoning was paid, & *Strolabella* after staying some minutes in the stripping Room, to pull off the Cloaths she had borrowed from the Daughter of the

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

House and to put on her own, was conducted to the Bear and ragged Staff by her two Lovers, where they were treated with the utmost Civility and good manners.

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### CHAP. XVI.

*Strolabella Resides at the Bear and Ragged Staff, alters her Conduct towards her Lovers, is Satyriz'd by Crack, gets him Arrested: Crack's Escape, his Poem, Strolabella leaves the Vagrantes, which occasions the Dissolution of the Company, the Author concludes the History with a Scheme in favour of the Vagrantes in general.*

**S**Strolabella was so well pleased with her Entertainment at the Bear and Ragged Staff, that she made it the Place of her Residence during her stay in the City. Her abiding there procur'd abundance of Custom to the House, & brought it in extraordinary Reputation. It was not only the Rendezvous of the *Vagrantes*, but was likewise much resorted to by People of Worth and Credit. *Strolabella* had not only acquired the Character of an excellent Actress but was also reputed a Wit, her Conversation was exceed-

## STROLLABELLA,

ingly courted, and being often in Company with Persons of superior Rank and Sense to any of her own Tribe, her Mind became more enlarged; She had a great Prospect before her, a distant View of Pomp & Equipage. She reflected on the Histories of the most celebrated Actresses of the British Stage, she found One in the Arms of a Monarch, another interr'd among Nobility, & a third living in all the Splendour of a Dutchess. Now was the Time of laying the Foundation of her rising Fortune, she did not question but her Merit would procure her an easy Access to the Theatre Royal, here her Excellencies would be more conspicuous and possibly be suitably rewarded. And now she made use of *Spout* and *Crack* as Persons of no consequence but to pass an Idle Hour with. *Crack* was not such a Novice in Love, but he found the Alteration; he perceived himself to be abused, that *Strollabella* only amused herself with a Passion which she did not feel; She was not like the Moth who plays with the Flame till she consumes herself, but like the Salamander who lives unhurt in scorching fires. *Crack* employed his Poetical Talent to  
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make her ridiculous, he wrote a Poem, en-  
titled *Strolabella's Fall*, or the Coal Pit  
discovered ; In this Piece he exposted her  
Naked to the World. When she read this  
Poem she could not contain herself, she gave  
vent to her Rage, and expressed herself in  
this manner ; *Oh the false perfidious Crack !  
Is this the Effect of all his boasted Love ?  
Has he forgot how he once in Rapture swore  
that Strolabella should be so far from being  
the Subject of his Ridicule, that she should be  
the Object of his Adoration ? Oh Heavens !  
is his unimagin'd Mine of solid Joy nothing  
but a Coal Pit ? I cannot bear it ; Oh un-  
happy Strolabella ! thy Name will be pro-  
phan'd by Vile Ballad Singers, and the Coal  
Pit be as common as the Black Joke.*

In the Extremity of her Rage and Indig-  
nation, she shows this Poem to her Land-  
lord ; insinuates to him, that it maliciously  
tended to disgrace his House, and to the  
manifest dishonour of the noble Sign of the  
Bear and Ragged Staff. The Man was cre-  
dulous, and *Crack* being at that Time in  
his Books, he was determined to incarcerate  
him. *Crack* took all imaginable Care of his  
Person ; he confin'd himself to the Theatre



## STROLABELLA.

as a Sanctuary, and for his more effectual Security, lock'd himself up in the Stock Chest; all his Precaution availed him nothing, for a few Nights after, he was arrested on the Stage in the Time of Action, while he was representing no less a Person than *Harry* the Eighth; But the Audience not brooking such an Indignity to a Monarch, rescued the King from the Hands of a Catchpole and permitted his Majesty to escape. He left behind him, an extraordinary Piece, a Poetical Performance relating to his own Misfortunes in these Words.

### The Tragic Hero's Lamentation.

**H** Ave I for this so oft the Di'dem wore,  
To be reduc'd unto a Fate so poor?  
Wither'd my Laurels are, severe my Lot,  
The Monarch, and the Warrior, both forgot;  
Two of my Generals confin'd in Jail,  
For forty Shillings,---who'd believe the Tale?  
And I myself, pent up within a Chest,  
A vile Apartment for a Royal Guest,  
Who did so often Liberty maintain,  
And in November last was Tamerlane;  
Will you compel me, cruel Fates! in May,  
As a Base Fugitive to steal away?

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## A Comical ROMANCE.

Oh cursed Thought! Oh! be it never said,  
The Hero of a Serjeant was afraid;  
Or ever did his Victories disgrace,  
To shun the Hat, whose Terror is it's Lace.  
Hard Fare, & Lodging in a loathsome Jayl,  
May bend my Body down, my Flesh is frail,  
My nobler Part fixt high will ever be  
Dependant on it self and ever free.  
The Botcher who but last year turn'd my Coat  
Swears by his G--ds, I owe him still a Groat;  
Besides for Drums, & Mugs of Ale in score,  
My Honour's pledg'd for 15 Shillings more:  
It is a vast and goodly Sum, but yet,  
Fortune may change, & I discharge the Debt;  
Else may the Sons of Publick Rapine, seize  
My Wiggs, my Parts, my Person if they please,  
I'll not repine, my Mind they can't enthrall,  
I and the Gods, will fight it with 'em all.

Strolabella soon quitted the Vagran-  
tes and shortly after shone in an higher  
Sphere, Her leaving Strolero hastened the  
dissolution of his Company, who betook  
themselves several ways & followed various  
Employments. Strolero link'd himself in  
partnership with a Jew, & is now a famous  
Pedlar in the North. Trunchbeon awakened

from

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## STROLABELLA.

from his Lethargy renounced the abandon-  
ed *Ragamuffina*, resolving to dedicate the  
remainder of his Life to glorious Actions, is  
enlisted in a Royal Regiment & very well  
respected by his Superiours. *Ragamuffina* is  
Agent to his internal Majesty and a noted  
procuress. *Crack* having been too long in  
*Strolero's* Company on the Cameleon Esta-  
blishment, & quite surfeited with the Non-  
subsistence, took his everlasting leave of the  
Faithless Stage; He now resides in the Se-  
cond City of the Kingdom in some Repu-  
tation as an Author: He maintains himself  
by writing Satyrs & making Punch. Some  
complain the first are too bitter, & the last  
is too acid. *Spout* grew as regardless of *Stro-  
labella*, as she of him, he turn'd the Current  
of his affection towards *Andromache*. The  
distrest Mother fell in Love with him at  
first sight: *Hector's* afflicted Widow was  
enamour'd to that degree that from the first  
moment she beheld him, she languished for  
Consummation: They are now in a thriving  
way, and keep a Tavern. *Buskin* hath  
changed his condition infinitely for the bet-  
ter, he and his Wite have set up an Eating  
House, and considering they had Travel'd

for

## A Comical ROMANCE.

for some years with *Strolero*, & consequently strangers to the art of Cookery, 'tis amazing to see how dextrous they are in their Employment. *Harlequino* has quitted one Stage for another, and is now assistant to an Itinerant Physician, under the facetious Denomination of a *Merry Andrew*.

I cannot conclude this History without hinting something in behalf of the *Vagrantes* in general.

It is to be hop'd the Government will make them useful in this present Exigence of affairs, being Persons of desperate Fortunes, above the Fear of death, & not over confident of a future State, the Gentlemen would certainly make excellent Soldiers.

Here would be a certain subsistence for 'em, an honourable Provision, which would place them in some degree of Reputation in the World, above their present wretched and precarious dependance.

The Ladies would be of infinite Service in our Colonies abroad, having often personated Heroines and Princesses, they Must certainly have more Exalted Sentiments, than those annual Supplies from the Courts of Justice: They may in process of Time

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People



## STROLABELLA,

People the *American* Provinces with a Race of Heroes, and I am persuaded that the virtuous *Strolabella* herself would not be averse to the first Law of Nature, but rather industrious in propagating the Species, for her Country's good.

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## FINIS.

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T H E

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III. *Strolabella & Ragamuffina described.*

IV. *A Description of the Gentlemen belonging to Strolero's Company. viz. Truncheon and Buskin.*

V. *Strolerina's wholesome advice to her Daughter, and the Death of that Excellent Adress.*

VI. *Strolabella's Wealth, her Conduct towards her Lovers, Mr. Truncheon's Illness and Ragamuffina's extraordinary Care and Attendance.*

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XV. *Crack Entertained by Strolabella, affronted by Strolero on account of his Riches; Buskin abus'd by Spout, Spout beaten. Strolabella and her Lovers turn'd out of the Inn, and repair to the Bear & Ragged staff.*

XVI. *Strolabella Resides at the Bear & Ragged Staff, alters her Conduct towards her Lovers, is Satyriz'd by Crack, gets him Arrested: Crack's Escape, his Poem, Strolabella leaves the Vagrantes, which Occasions the Dissolution of the Company; the Author concludes the History with a scheme in Favour of the Vagrantes in general.*

FINIS.

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